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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION REPORT - Bush to China Bush Presidency
Information Society Summit - Tunis CIA - Alleged Prisons
Overseas
PARIS - Wednesday, November 16, 2005

(A) SUBJECTS COVERED IN TODAY'S REPORT:

Bush to China
Bush Presidency
Information Society Summit - Tunis
CIA - Alleged Prisons Overseas

B) SUMMARY OF COVERAGE:

The World Summit on the Information Society which opens today
in Tunis continues to elicit commentaries, both because of the

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"ludicrous" (La Tribune) location chosen and because the system in place, ICANN, is working. Several regional editorials are devoted to the role of the Internet, including as pertains to terrorism. (See Part C) The French government's reaction to the alleged beating and harassment of a journalist and a TV crew, and its criticism of Tunis is widely reported in Le Figaro and Liberation which notes that out of the fifty expected state leaders, only twenty-five will be attending, and none from Europe.

Secretary Rice's visit to the Middle East and the agreement reached on border crossings is reported in Le Figaro which comments: "Without the intervention of Condoleezza Rice, the negotiations which had been at a standstill for months, would probably still be at an impasse."

President Bush's visit to Asia is widely covered in Le Figaro and Le Monde. For Le Figaro "the delicate mission entails giving support to one ally while not upsetting the others." Le Monde notes that the "Chinese-American relationship is marked by reciprocal mistrust." (See Part C)

Radio commentator Bernard Guetta devotes his editorial on France Inter to the continuing drop in President Bush's popularity ratings. Guetta writes: "The failure of a man is also the failure of the U.S. The failure of the U.S. in Iraq would be the victory of terrorism and al-Qaeda." (See Part C)

The alleged CIA prisons and transfer of detainees is again receiving attention as the Spanish government looks into allegations of CIA flights transiting through the Balearic Islands. (See Part C)

(C) SUPPORTING TEXT/BLOCK QUOTES:

Bush to China

"The Chinese-American Relationship Marked by Mistrust"
Bruno Philip in left-of-center Le Monde (11/16): "The growing economic dependency between the U.S. and China is forcing Beijing and Washington to continue with a complicated dialogue inside a relationship which is devoid of intimacy and often marked by mistrust. No major headway is expected after the visit, which is a sign that the relationship has its own limitations. But in Washington everyone does not share the same vision where China is concerned. The Pentagon's hawks and the anti-China lobbyists are worried about China's qualitative military changes, which they believe threatens America's interests in Asia. The State Department moderates on the other hand believe the U.S. must pursue its constructive dialogue with China, which can become a factor for world stability.

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Meanwhile President Bush and Secretary Rice tend to lean towards a third way: a rejection of the 'containment' policy but without establishing a strategic partnership with China."

"Bush at the Center of Asian Tensions"

Philippe Gelie in right-of-center Le Figaro (11/16): "President Bush arrived in Japan with a delicate mission: supporting his favorite ally while not upsetting the other interlocutors in the region. Considering the level of tension between Tokyo, Beijing and Seoul, the margin of maneuver is indeed narrow. Japan, which feels it is losing a leadership that is fast

going into China's hands, needs President Bush and his support. In Bush's world, Japan belongs to that category of former dictatorships which has become exemplary after its conversion to democracy and a market economy. President Bush praises Japan for its liberalism and salutes its contribution in Iraq."

Bush Presidency

"Two Western Crises"

Bernard Guetta on government-run France Inter radio (11/16): "Day after day the polls are increasingly bad for [George Bush] and even on the war on terrorism which was approved by 87% of the population in 2001, half of today's public opinion disapproves of the way it is being handled. The shift in public opinion is such that even the Republicans are trying to distance themselves from the President. Senators and congressmen do not want to be identified as being close to the White House. and doubts linger as to where the intervention in Iraq is leading. Added to the political concerns is a deep-seated moral unease. For the first time in his five years in power George Bush is on the defensive: there is little that could put him back into the captain's seat. But the problem is that this man's failure would mark the failure of the U.S. and an American failure in Iraq would mean victory for al Qaeda, for terrorism and for Jihaddists. George Bush has put international stability on the line. Coincidentally, just when the world could use a strong Europe, it is conspicuously absent. This would be a good time to be able to rely on Europe's political weight and diplomatic influence, but since the fiasco of the referendum last spring Europe no longer seems able to find a way to come together. Washington and Brussels: the entire western world is in a state of crisis."

CIA - Alleged Prisons Overseas

"A Scandal in Spain About CIA Secret Flights"

Left-of-center Liberation (11/16): "Just when Madrid and

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Washington are working on strengthening their relationship after Spain's withdrawal from Iraq, the Spanish government's warnings about alleged stopovers in Spanish airports of CIA flights sound like a threat. The Spanish Interior Minister's announcement that an investigation would be undertaken and the serious allegations in the press are all the more damning because they come on the heels of the Washington Post revelations of secret CIA prisons."

"Torture Charters to The Balearic Islands"

Alexandra Montaldier in right-of-center France Soir (11/26): "After Italy and Germany, Spain is the third country in Europe to open an investigation into the alleged transportation of U.S. prisoners to other countries where they would undergo interrogations and possibly torture."

Information Society Summit - Tunis

"Can We Let the UN Control the Internet?"

Nicolas Barre in right-of-center Le Figaro (11/16): "In essence the battle for control of the Internet opposes the U.S. to the rest of the world. The system in place, ICANN, is unique: although American, the system imposes its control over all nations. And so the question is: can the world tolerate an organization under the influence of the U.S. to control the network of networks? . Those opposed to a U.S. control of the Internet say this would be akin to the U.S. holding a sort of nuclear weapon of cyberspace. But the only counter-proposals are coming from totalitarian regimes, such as Cuba, Iran and China, which see the Internet as a tool for subversion. The fact that the summit is held in Tunis emphasizes the limitations of the UN. For the moment, the system in place managed by ICANN is working. But the U.S. knows that it must evolve. Still, the only regimes complaining are totalitarian regimes."

"The North South Digital Fracture"

Francois-Xavier Pietri in centrist La Tribune (11/16): "Organizing a world information summit in Tunis is a first. Considering Tunisia's policies on information, the summit could be said to be a farce. This is the only word that comes to mind. But there is a true need to widen the use of telecommunications if we want to avoid a bigger digital fracture between the North and the South."

"The World Does Not Need a Torn Web"

Joseph Limagne in regional Ouest-France (11/16): "Cyber crime exists and everyone knows to what extent al-Qaeda-linked terrorists know how to best make use of the Internet. A

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policing of the Web is therefore a real need. But on condition that civil liberties are not transgressed in the name of the war against terror. These political concerns conceal other and bigger economic concerns. The diverging points of view which continue to dominate predict that the Tunis summit will not end in success. But at least we can hope that there will be no break up of the single Internet network into a myriad of networks. What the world does not need is a torn Web."

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